



112 MacTanly Place
Staunton, VA 24401

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**BRITE Transit Advisory Committee Meeting Summary
September 22, 2015, 1:30 p.m.**

Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission
112 MacTanly Place
Staunton, VA 24401

	Name	Organization
✓	Steve Rosenberg	City of Staunton
	Jennifer Whetzel	County of Augusta
✓	Michael Barnes	City of Waynesboro
✓	Lisa Cline	Augusta Health
✓	Russell Neyman	Wilson Workforce & Rehabilitation Center
✓	Julie Markowitz	Staunton Downtown Development Association
	Terry Rodgers	Shenandoah Valley Social Services
✓	Wayne Martin	Blue Ridge Community College
✓	Stephen Ferguson	CATS Board
✓	Becky Messer	Transit Service Rider
✓	Susan Newbrough	Virginia Regional Transit
✓	Patrice Strachan	Department of Rail and Public Transportation

	Name	Organization
✓	Nancy Gourley	CSPDC
✓	Devon Thompson	CSPDC
	Bonnie Riedesel	CSPDC
✓	Kevin McDermott	CSPDC

Call to Order

The first meeting of the BRITE Technical Advisory Committee (BTAC) was called to order at 1:30 PM by Ms. Nancy Gourley. Ms. Gourley asked that each committee member introduce themselves, and provide background on their connection to the transit system and any involvement with creation of the Transit Development Plan (TDP).

Public Comment

Ms. Gourley opened the floor for public comment. There were no public comments.



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Organization

Review of Bylaws: Ms. Gourley presented the draft Bylaws and opened the floor for comments or questions concerning them. The copy provided to the BTAC at the meeting contained additional edits from the previous version that was included in the meeting packet. Edits to the Bylaws suggested by Mr. Steve Rosenberg included some “clean-up” edits and references to the Virginia Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and public process the BTAC will follow.

Ms. Gourley indicated that this committee is required to be a public body and, as such, will be required to follow the mandates of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA); advertise all meetings in advance through area newspapers as the public is welcome to attend these meetings and provide comment; and make meeting notices and the meeting minutes available on the website.

Election of Chair and Vice Chair & Establishment of Meeting Schedule: As stated in the Bylaws, a Chair and Vice Chair are necessary to operations of BTAC. Mr. Kevin McDermott and Ms. Gourley suggested that the election and meeting schedule agenda items be deferred until the end of the meeting.

BRITE Background: Before the meeting was called to order, Mr. Rosenberg indicated he was interested in hearing the process that was used to create the BRITE name. Ms. Gourley gave a brief overview of how a sub-task of the TDP was a branding component. A consultant, Pulsar, lead the TDP working group to create the name, logo, and color scheme for the system. Ms. Gourley clarified that BRITE is an acronym for Blue Ridge Inter-city Transit Express.

Service

BRITE BUZZ: Ms. Gourley gave a brief overview of the BRITE BUZZ. It is a one-page, monthly summary of transit happenings. This publication will provide the BTAC with information, even when the committee isn't meeting, and be available to share with their respective organizations. Similar to the initial copy provided to the committee, the report will focus on ridership as well as include operational highlights and spotlights on major happenings. This monthly publication will also be provided to the CSPDC Commissioners, as transit stakeholders.

Try Transit Week Update: Ms. Gourley indicated that the current week was Try Transit week, and press releases had been sent. There were several news stories on TV and in the newspapers in the region. As part of the Try Transit week, rides on Wednesday will be free of charge on all buses, and this has been publicized on the buses for a few weeks. Free rides were given last year for the event, and it resulted in increased ridership. Ms. Patrice Strachan briefly added that the week-long event is promoted throughout the State, and was pleased to see the promotional work this area has done.



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Implementation of 250 Connector Enhancements: The number one recommendation of the TDP was to implement improvements to the 250 Connector route. Ms. Gourley indicated that this route is the backbone of the transit service. Ms. Gourley reviewed the previous schedule, which included one hour breaks in service at lunchtime and dinner time Monday through Friday, and shorter service hours on Saturday. The new service hours will eliminate the breaks and extend Saturday hours to begin at 8:30 AM. Ms. Susan Newbrough gave an overview of the operational side of the changes being made, including driver relief switch-outs, minimizing rider phone calls, and solving overcrowding issues. Mr. Stephen Ferguson added that this will help the visually impaired riders read the schedule and calculate pick-up times with more ease. These improvements will be implemented November 2, 2015. Ms. Gourley indicated that these changes will be promoted and advertised accordingly, through press releases, handouts, letters, and advertising on the buses.

Bus Branding: Concurrent with the changes, Ms. Gourley hopes to have the first two buses branded with the BRITE logo. Prior to the meeting, Ms. Bonnie Riedesel suggested that this be done with a ribbon cutting event. From an operational standpoint, Ms. Newbrough indicated that the ribbon cutting should happen before the implementation date, and it was suggested that such an event could take place the week before. Ms. Lisa Cline offered for the event to take place at Augusta Health, a central location along the 250 Connector route. Mr. Russell Neyman offered Wilson Workforce and Rehabilitation Center (WWRC) as a back-up location and to work together with Augusta Health on the event. Mr. McDermott stressed the importance of getting the BRITE name out to the public, and suggested getting City and County officials, as well as their Commissions and Boards, to attend the event. Ms. Strachan volunteered State services for publicizing the information as well.

Ms. Julie Markowitz inquired whether or not the logo would be present on the bus stop signs as well. Ms. Gourley indicated that eventually they will. Options for bus stop signage can be explored at a future meeting. Ms. Gourley will find examples from other bus stop signs to show the possibilities of what can be implemented here. Locality sign requirements will have to be taken into consideration as well. Ms. Gourley informed the committee that an application has been submitted to the Federal and State agencies for grant funding to replace the signs during the next fiscal year. This can be done as a phased project – design, creation, and placement. Ms. Newbrough noted that there is already existing signage, and in most cases these signs may just have to be replaced. Mr. McDermott clarified that this process, from design to installation, could take up to a year, and suggested that in the interim a small decal be posted on existing signage. Ms. Newbrough also suggested that bus shelters could be a place for interim decals and signage, as well as changing the way that Virginia Regional Transit answers their phone calls to help associate the BRITE name with area transit.



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Marketing

Schedule Development: Many people have expressed interest in revamping the current timetables and maps brochure. Ms. Gourley indicated that in the interim quick content changes will be made for schedule changes. At some point in the future a more in-depth look can be taken, and a design process can be started involving public comment.

Website Development / BTAC Support: The TDP also recommended creating a webpage. Ms. Gourley indicated that the CSPDC's On-Call Consultant Program could be utilized. Ms. Markowitz suggested that when the process begins consider making the website responsive, as well as incorporating an app. Ms. Cline suggested a free app developing site as well. Most transit agencies are moving towards live GPS based/ "Where's my bus" tracking, and something of this scope is referenced in the TDP. Prices of such technology are becoming less expensive, and when the time comes funding opportunities would be researched and applied for. Ms. Strachan emphasized the importance of utilizing such technology, and other committee members voiced their agreement on the user-friendliness of the technology. Ms. Newbrough clarified that the two-way radios have GPS, although it is not live-time; buses in other regions have GPS capability, and providing that technology on these buses is possible. Not only is the GPS helpful for users, but from an operational standpoint it is helpful as well. Mr. McDermott suggested that implementing new technology could be done in phases.

Ms. Gourley asked the committee what level of involvement they were comfortable with in the creation of the website. Committee members agreed to have some involvement, like meeting with a consultant at a future meeting and review stages as development progressed.

Mr. Barnes inquired about other marketing strategies and outreach to get the word out about the brand to other agencies and organizations not represented on this committee. Mr. Barnes suggested sending out a letter, or something similar, to the same agencies that were contacted when the TDP was initiated. Ms. Markowitz also suggested handing out a card to riders, and the different outreach techniques could be coordinated with the ribbon cutting. Ms. Newbrough indicated that word is spreading verbally as well. Ms. Messer commented about ridership involvement, like participating in a driver appreciation program; Ms. Newbrough informed the group that Virginia Regional Transit does have such a program.

Planning

Regional Bus Study: The TDP, as well as the survey, identified the need for a study on regional connectivity among Harrisonburg, Staunton, Waynesboro, and Charlottesville to be completed. KFH Group, the same consultant retained for the TDP, has been retained for this study. In addition to the most current TDP, they also prepared Harrisonburg's TDP, so they are familiar with the area. The group is currently in the process of planning the kickoff meeting, to be held in October. The study group will be made up of representatives from the area PDCs, MPOs, universities, transit providers, and state



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transportation agencies. Mr. Barnes is also involved with this study group, and can serve as liaison between the two groups.

Discussion shifted to previous transit service that was operated between Waynesboro and Charlottesville. Previous services were limited to one midday trip per day, and were not focused on meeting the needs of commuters.

Deferred Agenda Items

Ms. Gourley deferred two previous agenda items, election of Chair and Vice Chair and the establishment of a regular meeting schedule for the TAC. With a majority in attendance, discussions for these items ensued.

It was agreed that the Bylaws would be approved at the next meeting, as Mr. Rosenberg had some additional suggestions. A document will be generated showing all the changes made to the original draft and will be included in the packet sent out to committee members in advance of the next meeting.

Before electing the Chair and Vice Chair, Ms. Cline asked that the roles and duties of the positions be reviewed. Mr. Martin volunteered himself for the position of Chair, and there was a unanimous vote confirming his election as Chair. Mr. Neyman nominated Mr. Barnes to the position of Vice Chair. Mr. Barnes accepted the nomination, and there was a unanimous vote confirming his election as Vice Chair.

Ms. Gourley asked the BTAC what day, time, and how often they would prefer to meet. Mr. Rosenberg suggested that the PDC staff recommend frequency of meetings that would be most beneficial. Ms. Gourley indicated that meeting every other month would be best for now, and mentioned that in the future that could be changed to quarterly. The TAC agreed that Wednesday afternoons, 3:00 pm, suited everyone's schedules.

Mr. Barnes inquired about the committee's involvement with overseeing any budgetary items. Ms. Gourley indicated that CSPDC Commissioners have the ultimate responsibility, but periodic reports and review of financial information can be provided to the committee.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the TAC, the meeting was adjourned at 2:35p.m.



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**BRITE Transit Advisory Committee Meeting Summary
November 19, 2015, 2:30 p.m.**

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	Name	Organization
✓	Steve Rosenberg	City of Staunton
✓	Jennifer Whetzel	County of Augusta
	Michael Barnes	City of Waynesboro
	Lisa Cline	Augusta Health
	Russell Neyman	Wilson Workforce & Rehabilitation Center
	Julie Markowitz	Staunton Downtown Development Association
✓	Terry Rodgers	Shenandoah Valley Social Services
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	Name	Organization
	Nancy Gourley	CSPDC
✓	Devon Thompson	CSPDC
✓	Bonnie Riedesel	CSPDC
✓	Kevin McDermott	CSPDC
✓	Brent Schoenduby (SDDA)	

Call to Order

The meeting of the BRITE Technical Advisory Committee (BTAC) was called to order at 2:32 PM by Mr. Wayne Martin, Chairperson. Chairperson Martin asked that each committee member introduce themselves.

Public Comment

Mr. Martin opened the floor for public comment. There were no public comments.



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Approve Minutes

Chairperson Martin presented the minutes from the September 22, 2015 BTAC meeting.

Mr. Steve Rosenberg moved, seconded by Ms. Becky Messer, to approve the minutes of the September 22, 2015, as submitted. Motion carried unanimously.

Old Business

Review of Bylaws: At the previous meeting, a set of Bylaws were drafted and committee members had the opportunity to add comments or suggestions. A redlined copy of the edits and clean copy of the Bylaws were presented to the committee for this meeting. Mr. Steve Rosenberg and Ms. Nancy Gourley worked together on the edits; these were mostly editorial and adding references to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). Ms. Bonnie Riedesel opened the floor for further comments, suggestions, or edits. Ms. Jennifer Whetzel inquired on the length of the terms of office. Ms. Riedesel clarified that the three year term mirrors that of the CSPDC and MPO Bylaws. If there is a vacancy, someone else can be appointed/elected to finish out the previous term.

Ms. Whetzel moved, seconded by Mr. Steven Ferguson, to approve the Bylaws, as submitted. Motion carried unanimously.

250 Connector Enhancement Update: Ms. Riedesel briefly updated the committee on the new enhancements to the 250 Connector. A ribbon-cutting ceremony was held on Friday, October 30, 2015 at Augusta Health for the BRITE brand on the buses. Additionally, expanded services for the 250 Connector went into effect Monday, November 2, 2015. Expanded service hours included longer service time on Saturdays as well as extended service through previous lunch and dinner breaks in the schedule. There has been a lot of good press coverage regarding these events and changes. Hopefully another press release will be picked up by media outlets in the coming week that includes a quote from a transit rider voicing how helpful the changes have been.

Ms. Susan Newbrough indicated that the operational side of the enhancements were working well thus far. Ridership numbers prior to and after implemented changes have been compared. Ridership is up by 200 passengers on Saturdays, and during the week ridership has increased by approximately 20-50 riders per day. News of the changes is spreading and leading to gradual rise in ridership in the affected times.

Ms. Riedesel added that there are new schedules available, and for committee members to take copies for their constituents, members, clients, etc. New stickers have also been placed on the signs for the 250 Connector to help spread the image/brand to the community.



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The next TDP recommendation to get implemented will be the Waynesboro Circulator. Significant route changes that were recommended in the TDP will require public hearings/meetings. Work on that will most likely begin in late Winter/early Spring. Staunton Trolleys will follow after the Waynesboro Circulator. City of Staunton officials will be consulted as to how to proceed with branding the signature Trolleys. Recommendations to alter routes will also be implemented. Ms. Becky Messer suggested that the Staunton Trolley route times be extended, similar to the 250 Connector to make connections between the two services more efficient. Discussion pertaining to the specific recommendations made in the TDP and how they aligned to Ms. Messer's suggestion ensued.

Ms. Riedesel indicated that the CSPDC will be gradually working towards implementing the TDP recommendations, but that it will take time and money. Ms. Riedesel also outlined some of the next steps to be taken. As noted earlier in the meeting, the Waynesboro Circulator will be the next area to implement recommendations and make changes, followed by the Staunton Trolleys. Another activity that will be undertaken is the bus stop signage, to be discussed later on in the meeting.

Mr. McDermott sought clarification about the placement of BRITE stickers along the 250 Connector route. Ms. Susan Newbrough indicated that the stickers were placed at all stops along the 250 Connector. It was suggested that these stickers also be placed in bus shelters at Target, Walmart (Staunton and Waynesboro), and the Staunton Hub.

New Business

Triennial Review: Ms. Riedesel informed the committee that Ms. Nancy Gourley and Ms. Cindi Johnson were attending a Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Triennial Review Training, in Arlington, Virginia. The FTA is a federal partner and funder for the transit program, and every three years they go through an intense audit of transit programs. This will be the first review that the CSPDC has gone through. The site visit for the Triennial Review will be late March, over a three-day period. Prior to the site visit, CSPDC staff, as well as Virginia Regional Transit, will work to answer Review questions that will be submitted in December. The review looks at financial reports, availability of services, Title VI requirements, etc. The committee will be kept posted on the progress of preparations for Review.

Ms. Patrice Strachan also added the review is intense, but intended to help. With the amount of federal monies involved, its imperative that receiving organizations are compliant with regulations. The timing of this review will be helpful, and put this program on the right path sooner rather than later.

Before moving on to the discussion of bus stop signs, Ms. Newbrough briefed the committee on the holiday schedule.



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Discussion of Bus Stop Signs: Chairperson Martin indicated that the meeting packets included an example of best practices and some visual examples of bus stop signs. Ms. Riedesel started the bus stop sign discussion by showing existing bus stop signs. Currently the system in this region has five different types of signs. Signage will play a role in developing the overall BRITE brand. Ms. Riedesel briefly discussed some of the logistics behind implementing new signage, like procurement, budgeting, and placement. Ms. Riedesel then opened up the floor for an open discussion for content on signs.

Ideas/suggestions/comments voiced by committee members included:

- Once a schedule is in place, having a large, laminated copy in the bus shelters is very helpful.
- Not printing maps or schedules on signs in case of changes being made, making for inaccuracies and dated information.
- The simpler, the better – this is a significant restart, and many changes may need to be made over the coming years.
- Riders are looking for information like contact phone number, website, and routes associated with the stop.
- How to name routes?
 - Currently, there is some confusion over the route names in place.
 - Possibly make route names associated by color, i.e. red line, blue line, etc.
 - Some entities may want to retain current identity, like Staunton Trolley moniker and BRCC shuttles.
 - Possibly do route numbers and have associated names with them.
- Number stops as a way to identify, and these numbers can go on signs, maps, etc. (Example Stop # 1, Stop # 2, Stop #3)
- Picture of bus on sign to identify as as a bus stop.
- Make sure signs aren't too busy.
- Take into consideration any restrictions/guidelines localities may have, like in downtown districts.
 - Talk with planning staff(s) about those restrictions/guidelines.
 - Maintain look, but tie in with new branding.
- Should signs include "No Parking"? Are there issues with parking near or at stops?
 - It can be an issue, but there is normally a workaround.
 - Look into regulations of City and County.
- New and additional signage:
 - Zoning issues and easements for signage.
 - Coming from a rural service, there were flag-down services. In Staunton and Waynesboro there's a fair amount of signage, but between corridors there is minimal signage.



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- There are still flag-down services, like the 250 Connector route. Attempts are being made to formalize bus stop areas.
- It is seen as a safety issue as well. Additionally, it increases the travel time for the buses.
- In the TDP, there was a recommendation to eliminate flag stops.

Mr. McDermott clarified and summarized the committees suggestions for bus stop sign content, to include: simple design, the BRITE logo, contact information (phone and web), routes served by the stop (name or number), and picture of a bus.

Other (Unofficial): Before adjourning, Mr. McDermott briefly updated the committee on the status of the inter-regional bus study. This study will focus on providing commuter service connecting the cities of Harrisonburg, Staunton, Waynesboro, and Charlottesville. Each jurisdiction, as well as private partners, are represented on the committee, including Mr. Michael Barnes of this committee, and the committee will be working with the consultant KFH Group. The scope is nearly finalized, and work will begin within the coming weeks. The main goal of this study is to find if such a service would be feasible to conduct, specifically demand and cost.

This commuter service will have morning and evening routes connecting the four cities, using an express route with limited stops. Mr. McDermott shared possible logistics of the service and a few estimates of the number of commuters and where they are going. Discussion following this focused on the economic benefits of the service, other demographics the service could cater to, and connectivity and access with the BRITE routes.

Mr. McDermott will keep this committee updated with the study happenings, and Chairperson Martin asked that the update be included on the agendas for the next few meetings.

Adjournment

Chairperson Martin indicated that the next committee meeting will be held Thursday, January 13, 2016, at 2:30 PM. Mr. Rosenberg indicated that the minutes from the last meeting suggested a meeting time of 3:00 PM, but the next few meeting times are at 2:30 PM. Ms. Riedesel and Mr. McDermott suggested that a Doodle Poll/email be sent out the committee members verifying a time that works best for everyone.

There being no further business to come before the BTAC, the meeting was adjourned at 3:24 PM.